



UNSW
SYDNEY

Arts & Social Sciences

School of Education

EDST2032

Critical Thinking and Education

Summer 2019

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IMPORTANT:

For student policies and procedures relating to assessment, attendance and student support, please see website, <https://education.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/courses/course-outlines/>

The School of Education acknowledges the Bedegal and Gadigal people as the traditional custodians of the lands upon which we learn and teach.

1. LOCATION

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
School of Education
EDST 2032 Critical Thinking and Education (6 units of credit)
Summer 2019

2. STAFF CONTACT DETAILS

Course Coordinator: Dr Greg Leaney
Office Location: John Goodsell 130
Email: g.leaney@unsw.edu.au
Phone:
Availability: By appointment

3. COURSE DETAILS

Course Name	Critical Thinking and Education
Credit Points	6 units of credit (uoc)
Workload	Includes 150 hours including class contact hours, readings, class preparation, assessment, follow up activities, etc.
Schedule	NO FACE-TO-FACE CLASSES ON WEDNESDAYS
Lecture	10am – 12pm; Mon, Tue, Thu (CLB6), Fri (CLB2)
Tutorial/s	1pm: Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri 2pm: Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri

Summary of Course

This course critically examines the social, philosophical, epistemological and ethical aspects of a number of important issues in education, such as: determining goals of education; learning as knowledge and understanding; the role of educators in society; and social justice considerations.

The main ways in which the course has changed since last time as a result of student feedback are:

Sequencing of some classroom content; structure of some tutorial exercises.

Aims of the Course

Through critical reflection and evaluation this course aims to develop your knowledge and understanding of:

- Differing goals and approaches towards education;
- Student characteristics and how students learn;
- Ethical principles and their relevance for education and teaching.

Important Information

Assessment: Students must pass ALL assignments in order to pass the course. Only by passing all assignments can the Graduate Attributes be achieved.

Attendance: Students are expected to give priority to university study commitments. Unless specific and formal permission has been granted, failure to attend 80% of classes in a course may result in failure

Student Learning Outcomes

Outcome		Assessment/s
1	Critically reflect on the conceptions of, purposes for, and goals of education, and how these relate to the student, the teacher and schools	1,2,3
2	Critically examine the conceptual issues of knowledge, meaning, curriculum, and pedagogy through theories of learning, and come to a considered evaluative position on the interplay of these conceptual issues	2,3
3	Understand and critically evaluate the socio-political purposes of education, including an examination of the philosophical underpinning and practice of teaching in a democracy	2,3
4	Acquire and/or improve, through philosophical examination, the use of the critically reflective skills of explanation, evaluation, analysis and argumentation	1,2,3

Graduate Attributes (AITSL Professional Graduate Teaching Standards)

Standard		Assessment/s
1.1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students and how these may affect learning	1,2,3
1.2	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of research into how students learn and the implications for teaching	1,2,3
7.1	Understand and apply the key principles described in codes of ethics and conduct for the teaching profession	2

4. RATIONALE FOR THE INCLUSION OF CONTENT AND TEACHING APPROACH

- Education is a critically reflective enterprise:

The content, conduct, and organisation of education give rise to a number of critically reflective questions, which ask things like:

- What are the meanings of various claims or arguments made in the field of education?
- How should schools be structured and how should students be taught?

- As a critically reflective enterprise, questions about education cannot only be answered by gathering empirical information:

Examining questions about education can, and typically does (and justifiably so), involve gathering empirical information. However, critically reflective questions are not empirical questions: they are normative, evaluative, political, moral and/or philosophical questions.

- Critical thinking includes a range of skills that need to be acquired, and continually practised and improved upon:

This course will explain and explore what is involved in critically thinking about education, and will require you to utilise critically reflective thinking skills in classroom and assessment activities.

5. TEACHING STRATEGIES

Teaching strategies used during the course will include:

- explicit teaching including lectures and a range of strategies to foster interest and support learning;

- o structured occasions for reflection on learning to allow students to reflect critically on issues discussed;
- o opportunities for whole group and small group dialogue and discussion, allowing students the opportunity to demonstrate their capacity to communicate;
- o online learning from readings and web links on the EDST2032 Moodle website.

These activities will occur in a classroom climate that is supportive and inclusive of all learners.

6. COURSE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

Week Day	Lecture Topic	Tutorial Topic
Week 1	What is education and schooling?	-
Day 1	Introduction & administration Purposes of education	Purposes of education
Day 2	Goals of Australian education	Goals of Australian education
Day 3	Different conceptions of education	What is education for?
Day 4	The profession of teaching	Professional obligations & rights
Week 2	What can, and should, be taught and learned?	-
Day 5	Conceptions of knowledge	Empiricism, rationalism, social constructivism
Day 6	Conceptions of meaning	Scepticism, empiricism, constructivism
Day 7	Meaning & curriculum	Constructivism, constructionism
Day 8	Approaches to learning	Individual & social learning approaches, critical thinking
Week 3	What are schools for politically?	-
Day 9	Ethical theories	Deontology, consequentialism, virtue ethics
Day 10	Political models of education	Democracy, civics
Day 11	Multiculturalism	Politics of difference
Day 12	Socially just democratic education	Freedom & fairness

7. ASSESSMENT

Assessment Task	Length	Weight	Learning Outcomes Assessed	Graduate Attributes Assessed	Due Date
1: Article analysis	500 words	20%	1,4	1.1	4/1/2019
2: Reflective Portfolio	2950 words	45%	1,2,3,4	1.1,1.2,7.1	29/1/2019
3: Essay	2000 words	35%	1,2,3,4	1.1,1.2	1/2/2019

Assessment Details

Assessment 1 – Article Analysis

Length: 500 words, 12-pt double-spaced.

Due: 5pm on Friday 4th January 2019 (i.e. Friday BEFORE Week 1). This assessment piece is due prior to face-to-face classes starting so that you can evaluate if you would like to continue in the course prior to the census date of 13/1/2019.

Weight: 20%

Purpose: To give you practice at critically examining an article in depth, and reflecting upon its conceptual material.

Method: Analyse Carr (2003) from the required readings in the Course Outline placed on the course's Moodle website. Full reference: Carr, D. (2003). The complex role of the teacher. *Making Sense of Education: An introduction to the philosophy and theory of education and teaching*. London: RoutledgeFalmer, pp. 35-50.

Examine this reading in your own words, as follows:

- Main point: What is the main point or argument of this reading?
- Support: Identify and explain the reasons, evidence, or premises that the author gives in support of this main point or argument.
- Objections: Identify and explain any objections to the main point or argument discussed by the author.
- Evaluation: Evaluate the main point or argument. Do you agree with the author's position? Why or why not?
- Interesting: Is there anything else that you find interesting, or confusing, or about which you would like to raise as a question? If so, explain briefly.

Write the paper in paragraph format under the headings above (Main point, Support, Objections, Evaluation, Interesting). Use direct quotations sparingly, if at all, as your examination should overwhelmingly be in your own words.

Assessment 2 – Reflective Portfolio

Length: 2950 words approx. This is a guiding suggestion – it is not a strict upper word limit (as I do not require nor want you to artificially limit your notes). You might need to rework or ‘clean up’ your daily reactions for the final Reflective Portfolio submission, so that they are sufficiently clear and comprehensive.

Due: 5pm on Tuesday 29th January 2019 (i.e. Tuesday after Week 3).

Weight: 45%.

Purpose: To assess your understanding of the entire course’s material, and how that understanding has developed over the course.

Method: Record your thoughts on the course’s readings and class material for each day:

(a) Readings: The first part of this record should be your brief reaction to each of the required readings in the Course Outline placed on the course’s Moodle website: **250 words for each of 7 of the 8 required readings, excluding Carr (2003). (1750 words approx.).**

You are **required** to do each of the set readings scheduled for each week prior to the relevant tutorials, as tutorial discussions are in part based upon your reactions to these readings. **You are strongly encouraged to engage with all of the required readings before the relevant face-to-face classes begin;** reading complex academic articles more than once helps you to clarify, understand and evaluate the concepts and issues they raise.

Structure your 250 word written reaction to the readings using these 3 headings of “Main point”, “Support” & “Interesting”:

- **Main point:** What is the main point or argument of this reading?
- **Support:** Identify and explain the reasons, evidence, or premises that the author gives in support of this main point or argument.
- **Interesting:** You should take note of anything that you find interesting, or confusing, or about which you would like to raise as a question.

Bring these thoughts, questions, etc. to each tutorial, as tutorial discussions will be based upon the interaction of the class’s prepared thoughts. It is also encouraged for you to bring anything of relevance that you see in the media or other outside sources.

(b) Classes: The second part of this record should be your brief reaction to the lecture and tutorial material and discussions following each day: **100 words for each of the 12 days of class. (1200 words approx.).** For example, using any one or more of the following prompts is acceptable: What did you learn today? What (if anything) did you find interesting, or informative, or clearer, or still puzzling? That is, what is your self-evaluation of your current state of understanding of the course’s material, and the debates and issues that it has raised?

UNSW SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
 FEEDBACK SHEET
 EDST2032 CRITICAL THINKING AND EDUCATION

Student Name:

Student No.:

Assessment Task: Reflective Portfolio

SPECIFIC CRITERIA	(-) ←	→	(+)
Understanding of the question or issue and the key concepts involved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understanding of the set readings and their relationship to relevant areas of theory, research and practice understanding of the lecture and tutorial material and their relationship to relevant areas of theory, research and practice clarity and accuracy in use of key terms and concepts understanding of the key principles described in codes of ethics and conduct for the teaching profession (Grad. Standard 7.1). 			
Depth of analysis and/or critique in response to the task: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> depth of analysis of relevant key concepts and principles in the set readings depth of analysis of areas of educational impact of the issues/concepts raised in the lecture and tutorial material clarity and depth of argument in relation to the issues/concepts raised in the course material evidence of personal responses to the issues/concepts raised in the course material demonstration of knowledge and understanding of physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students and how these may affect learning (Grad. Standard 1.1) demonstration of knowledge and understanding of research into how students learn and the implications for teaching (Grad. Standard 2.1). 			
Familiarity with and relevance of professional and/or research literature used to support response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reference specifically made to material, research and ideas presented in class and associated resources range of research and professional literature on education theory to support response. 			
Structure and organisation of response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> appropriateness of overall structure of response clarity and coherence of organisation, including use of section headings where appropriate. 			
Presentation of response according to appropriate academic and linguistic conventions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clarity, consistency and appropriateness of APA conventions for quoting, paraphrasing, attributing sources of information, and listing references clarity and appropriateness of sentence structure, vocabulary use, spelling, punctuation and word length. 			
GENERAL COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT TIME			

Lecturer

Date

Recommended: /20 (FL PS CR DN HD)

Weighting: 45%

NB: The ticks in the various boxes are designed to provide feedback to students; they are not given equal weight in determining the recommended grade. Depending on the nature of the assessment task, lecturers may also contextualize and/or amend these specific criteria. **The recommended grade is tentative only, subject to standardisation processes and approval by the School of Education Learning and Teaching Committee.**

Assessment 3 – Essay

Length: 2,000 words, 12-pt double-spaced.

Due: 5pm on Friday 1st February 2019 (i.e. Friday after Week 3).

Weight: 35%.

Purpose: To examine and evaluate one of the educational debates raised in the course material.

Method: Choose one of the essay questions from the options below. Produce a formal academic essay, with: correct structure (i.e. introduction, body, and conclusion), utilisation of relevant academic and professional resources, correct APA referencing, personal deliberation, argumentation, and presentation.

(1) Peters (1972) describes a conception of education that values “it because it has now become the royal road to better jobs and to getting on in the world”; that is, education being for vocational and social purposes. He describes an alternative conception of education which aims at producing the “educated person”, which is “someone who is capable of delighting in a variety of pursuits and projects for their own sake and whose pursuit of them and general conduct of his [or her] life are transformed by some degree of all-round understanding and sensitivity” (p.9).

Central question: What should the purpose of education be?

Involved steps and questions: Explain what is involved in each of these conceptions of education. Which view or views do you agree with, and why? Briefly describe what approach to pedagogy and content would be involved in your evaluation of the purpose of education.

(2) Neill (1982) states that at Summerhill they “set out to make a school in which we should allow children freedom to be themselves. In order to do this, we had to renounce all discipline, all direction, all suggestion, all moral training, all religious instruction. We have been called brave, but it did not require courage. All it required was what we had – a complete belief in the child as a good, not an evil, being” (p.369).

Wringe (1988) explains that educators “characteristically oblige children to do things they do not immediately want to do in the belief that restriction placed on their negative freedom now will be more than compensated by their enhanced autonomy or positive freedom later on (White, 1973, p. 22), as a result of the useful things they are about to learn” (p.47).

Central question: Is freedom or compulsion/obligation the best way to educate the young?

Involved steps and questions: Explain the views of freedom and compulsion discussed by these educational theorists. Which view do you agree with, and why? Briefly describe what approach to pedagogy and content would be involved in your evaluation of the best view of education.

(3) Carr (2003) claims “first, that education is – no less than health and justice – an inherently normative concept; secondly (and consequently), that teaching is – no less than medicine and law – an essentially moral practice” (p.39).

He further claims that “since many if not most professional issues will be as much moral as technical, some capacity for authentic and intellectually responsible engagement with controversial questions about the ultimate contribution of professional practice to human flourishing must surely be a *sine qua non* [that is, defining or intrinsic characteristic] of effective professionalism, and the job of the professional academy cannot therefore be merely that of instruction in second-hand or uncontroversial techniques” (Carr, 2003, p.41).

Central questions: Is teaching a professional enterprise? What does this mean for how teachers are trained?

Involved steps and questions: What defines a profession? Is teaching a profession? Do you agree that teaching is an inherently moral enterprise? Why or why not? What implications for the training of teachers would result from your position? What implications for your approach to pedagogy and content would result from your position?

(4) Musgrave (1993) contends that “[r]ather than trying to defend the reducibility of all knowledge to propositional knowledge, I think it better to admit that the justified true belief account really applies only to one kind of knowledge” (p.8).

Central question: What, if any, knowledge can be taught by teachers to students?

Involved steps and questions: What is the justified true belief account of knowledge? Are there other kinds of knowledge? Do we really know anything? If we have knowledge, what do we know? If we have knowledge, how do we know it? Briefly describe what approach to pedagogy and content would be involved in your evaluation of the question of knowledge.

(5) The 2004 NSW Department of Education and Communities Ministerial Statement *Values in NSW Public Schools* states has as one of its social outcomes that in “classrooms and school communities the core values of NSW public schools will contribute to a society that: values all people” (Refshauge, 2004, p.6).

Balint (2010) argues, however, “that using education to encourage the respect and appreciation of difference is deeply problematic for both adults and children” because “it is a poor servant of those whose differences it is meant to protect, and crucially that it cannot be justified on the key liberal premise of protecting the freedom of individuals to live their (non-harming) lives as they see fit” (p.129).

Central question: Should we try to teach values in schools and, if so, how?

Involved steps and questions: What is the overall approach to teaching values in NSW public schools? How can it be justified? How can it be challenged? If you agree with teaching values in schools briefly describe what approach to pedagogy and content would be involved in your approach to values education.

TIPS FOR ASSESSMENT PIECES

The assessments pieces will be assessed on your demonstrated understanding of the material, and on the quality of your argument. Arguments may, and usually are, contestable. However, some arguments are good ones, and others are poor. You should endeavour to make sure that yours are good, and good arguments are clear, coherent and comprehensive.

A good argument (amongst other things) takes account of objections that have been made or might reasonably be made – not just to the conclusion, but also to the premises or the logic. You should look therefore at arguments against the conclusion that you think you should draw, and against your premises and logic. And you should give a careful reply. Ask yourself if your argument is coherent, plausible, and defensible.

Your argument's premises may include some value premises and some factual ones, or some that are both at once. (There are problems with the distinction that is claimed to exist between facts and values.) If you can defend them against plausible alternative views, so much the better.

Your argument will need to include support from academic references. Although simply relying on piecing together material from outside references will not replace having a good argument, utilising academic references appropriately will strengthen your argument. Any references must be referenced correctly in APA style, and this includes the relevant page/s number/s of the source material used where appropriate for the APA referencing conventions.

For the essay, there is likely to be more than one plausible answer to the educational issue you choose. You should combat the arguments for this/these alternative/s, if it/they clash/es with yours (which often will be the case).

Note: It is quite acceptable in this subject, and usually significantly grammatically easier, to write in the first person (e.g. "I argue that..."; "First I will examine...") in all the assessment tasks.

8. RESOURCES

Required Readings

Note: A copy of all 8 of the required readings will be posted on the course's Moodle website.

Week 1

- 1) Peters, R.S. (1972). Education and the Educated Man. In R.F. Dearden, P.H. Hirst & R.S. Peters (eds.). *A Critique of Current Educational Aims* (pp. 1-16). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- 2) Neill, A.S. (1982). Summerhill (Selection). In S.M. Cahn (Ed.). *Classic and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Education* (pp. 368-376). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- 3) Carr, D. (2003). The complex role of the teacher. *Making Sense of Education: An introduction to the philosophy and theory of education and teaching* (pp. 35-50). London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Week 2

- 4) Musgrave, A. (1993). The problem of knowledge. *Common Sense, Science and Scepticism* (pp. 1-18). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- 5) Groundwater-Smith, S., Ewing, R., & Le Cornu, R. (2015). Ch.4, The nature of learning. *Teaching: Challenges and Dilemmas* [5th ed, pp. 77-107]. South Melbourne: Cengage Learning.
- 6) Moon, J. (2008). A defining statement on critical thinking and an introduction to the pedagogy. *Critical Thinking: An exploration of theory and practice* (pp. 125-137). New York: Routledge.

Week 3

- 7) Balint, P.A. (2010). Avoiding an Intolerant Society: Why respect of difference may not be the best approach. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 42(1), 129-141.
- 8) Reich, R. (2007). How and Why to Support Common Schooling and Educational Choice at the Same Time. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 41(4), 709-725.

Further Resources

- Anderson, H. (2002). On the Limits of Liberalism and Multiculturalism. *Teachers' College Record*, 12th August 2002, pp. 1-6.
- Arneson, R.J. (2002). Why Justice Requires Transfers to Offset Income and Wealth Inequalities. *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 19(1), 172-200.
- Aspin, D.N. (2013). Reflections on Peters' View of the Nature and Purpose of Work in Philosophy of Education. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. 45(2), 219-235.
- Biesta, G. (2012). Philosophy of Education for the Public Good: Five challenges and an agenda. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 44(6), 581-593.
- Biesta, G. (2010). *Good Education in an Age of Measurement: Ethics, politics, democracy*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.
- Carr, D. (2003). Rival Conceptions of Practice in Education and Teaching. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 37(2), 253-266.
- Carr, W. (2004). Philosophy and Education. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 38(1), 55-73.
- Glaserfeld, E. von (1991). Cognition, Construction of Knowledge, and Teaching. In M.R. Matthews (ed.), *History, Philosophy and Science Teaching: Selected Readings*. New York: Teachers College Press, pp. 117-132.
- Clark, J.A. (2013). The Place of Philosophy in the Training of Teachers: Peters revisited. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. 45(2), 128-141.
- Curren, R. (2003) (Ed). *A Companion to the Philosophy of Education*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Groundwater-Smith, S., Brennan, M., McFadden, M., & Mitchell, J. (2001). Changing Trends in Curriculum Design. *Secondary Schooling in a Changing World*, Ch. 11. Marrickville: Harcourt Australia, pp. 191-205.
- Gutmann, A. (2006). The Authority and Responsibility to Educate. In R. Curren (ed.), *A Companion to the Philosophy of Education*. Carlton: Blackwell, pp. 397-411.
- Guttek, G. (2009). *New Perspectives in Philosophy and Education*. Upper Saddle River: Pearson.
- Harðarson, A. (2012). Why the Aims of Education Cannot Be Settled. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 46(2), 223-235.
- Hattie, J. (2008). *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*. London: Routledge.

- Hodgson, N. (2010). What Does It Mean to Be an Educated Person? *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 44(1), 109-123.
- Hurley, P. (2005). *A Concise Introduction to Logic*. 9th Edition. Boston: Cengage Learning.
- Jones, P.N. (2010). Toleration and Recognition: What should we teach? *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. 42(1), 38-56.
- Katz, M. S. (2010). R. S. Peters' Normative Conception of Education and Educational Aims. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 43(S1), 97-108.
- Lang, J. C. (2011). Epistemologies of Situated Knowledges: "Troubling" Knowledge in Philosophy of Education. *Educational Theory*, 61(1), 75-96.
- Loughran, J. (2012). *What Expert Teachers Do: Enhancing Professional Knowledge for Classroom Practice*. London: Routledge.
- Mane, G. (2004). In apprehension how like a god!' Philosophy and Education. In N. Smith (ed.), *Education and the Ideal*. Epping: New Frontier Publishing, pp. 219-247.
- Matthews, M.R. (1995). Constructivism: The Good and the Bad. *Challenging New Zealand Science Education*. Palmeston North: Dunmore Press, pp. 92-109.
- Mendus, S. (1995). Tolerance and Recognition: education in a multicultural society. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 29(2), 191-201.
- Meyer, D.L. (2009). The Poverty of Constructivism. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 41(3), 332-341.
- Mulnix, J.W. (2012). Thinking Critically about Critical Thinking. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. 44(5), 464-479.
- Oancea, A. and Bridges, D. (2009). Philosophy of education in the UK: the historical and contemporary tradition. *Oxford Review of Education*, 35(5), 553-568.
- Phillips, D. C. (2010). What is Philosophy of Education? In R. Bailey, Barrow, R., Carr, D., McCarthy, C. (eds). *The SAGE Handbook of Philosophy of Education*. London: SAGE.
- Refshauge, A. (2004). Values in NSW public schools. *Ministerial Statement of the Minister for Education and Training and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs*. Sydney: NSW Department of Education and Training.
- Sachs, J. (2001). Teacher professional identity: competing discourses, competing outcomes. *Journal of Education Policy*, 16(2), 149-161.
- Smeyers, P. and Depaepe, M. (2012). The Lure of Psychology for Education and Educational Research. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 46(3), 315-331.
- Sweller, J. (2012). De Groot's lesson. In S. Suggate & E. Reese (Eds), *Contemporary Debates in Childhood Education and Development*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, pp. 19-24.
- Tubbs, N. (2005). Philosophy in Education and Education in Philosophy. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 39(2), 189-216.
- van Gelder, T. (2005). Teaching Critical Thinking: Some Lessons from Cognitive Science. *College Teaching*, 53(1), 41-6.
- Wringe, C. (1984). Equality, Freedom and Diversity. *Democracy, Schooling and Political Education*. London: George Allen and Unwin, pp. 43-64.
- Wringe, C. (1988). The Trouble with Rational Autonomy. *Understanding Educational Aims*. London: Allen and Unwin, pp. 44-54.
- Winstanley, C. (2008). Philosophy and the Development of Critical Thinking. In M. Hand & C. Winstanley (Eds), *Philosophy in Schools*. London: Continuum, pp. 85-95.
- Winstanley, C. (2012). Alluring Ideas: Cherry Picking Policy from Around the World. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 46(4), 503-674.

Other resources materials will be uploaded to the course's Moodle website if they become relevant to the course content.